

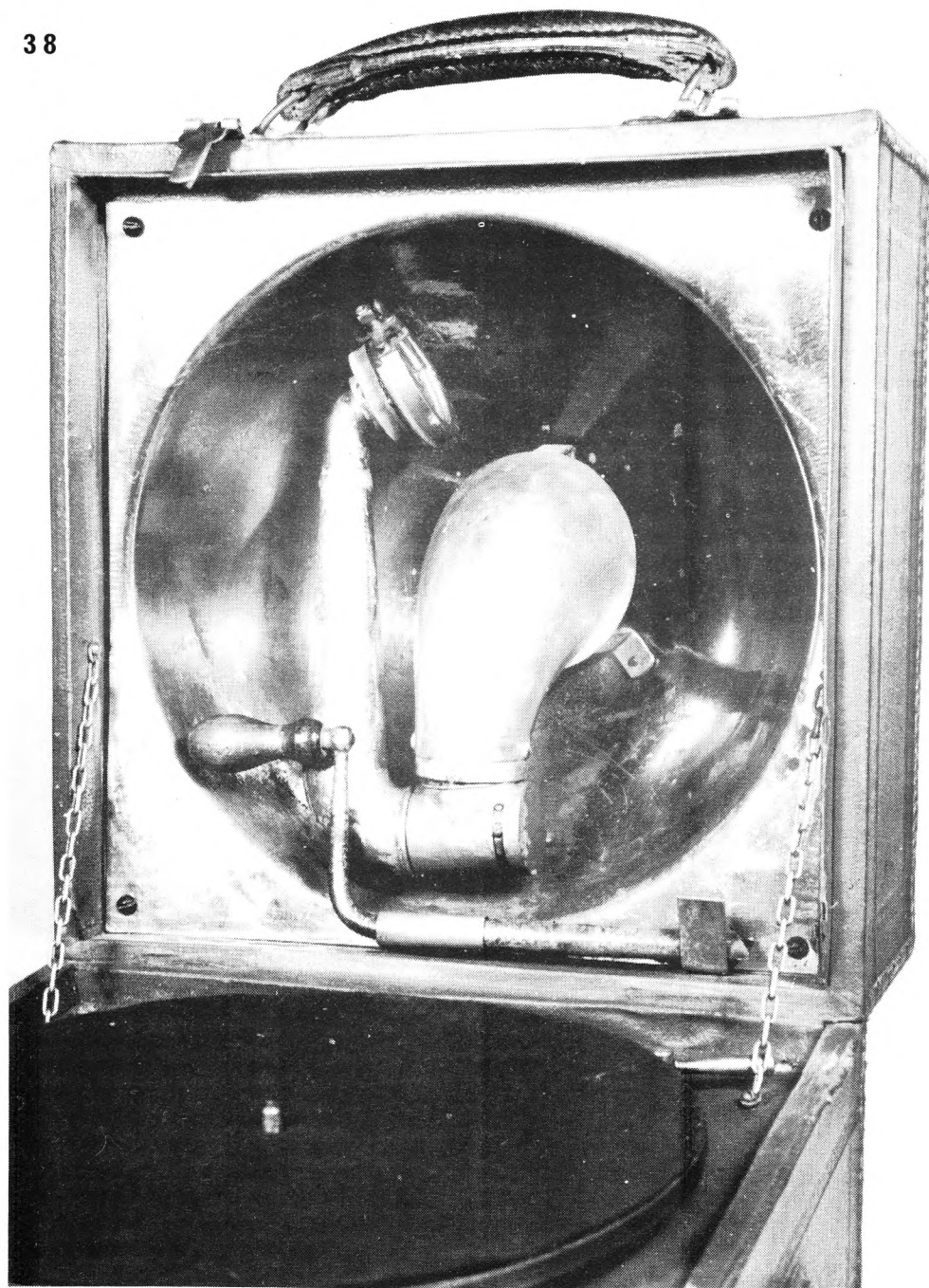
# THE TALKING MACHINE REVIEW

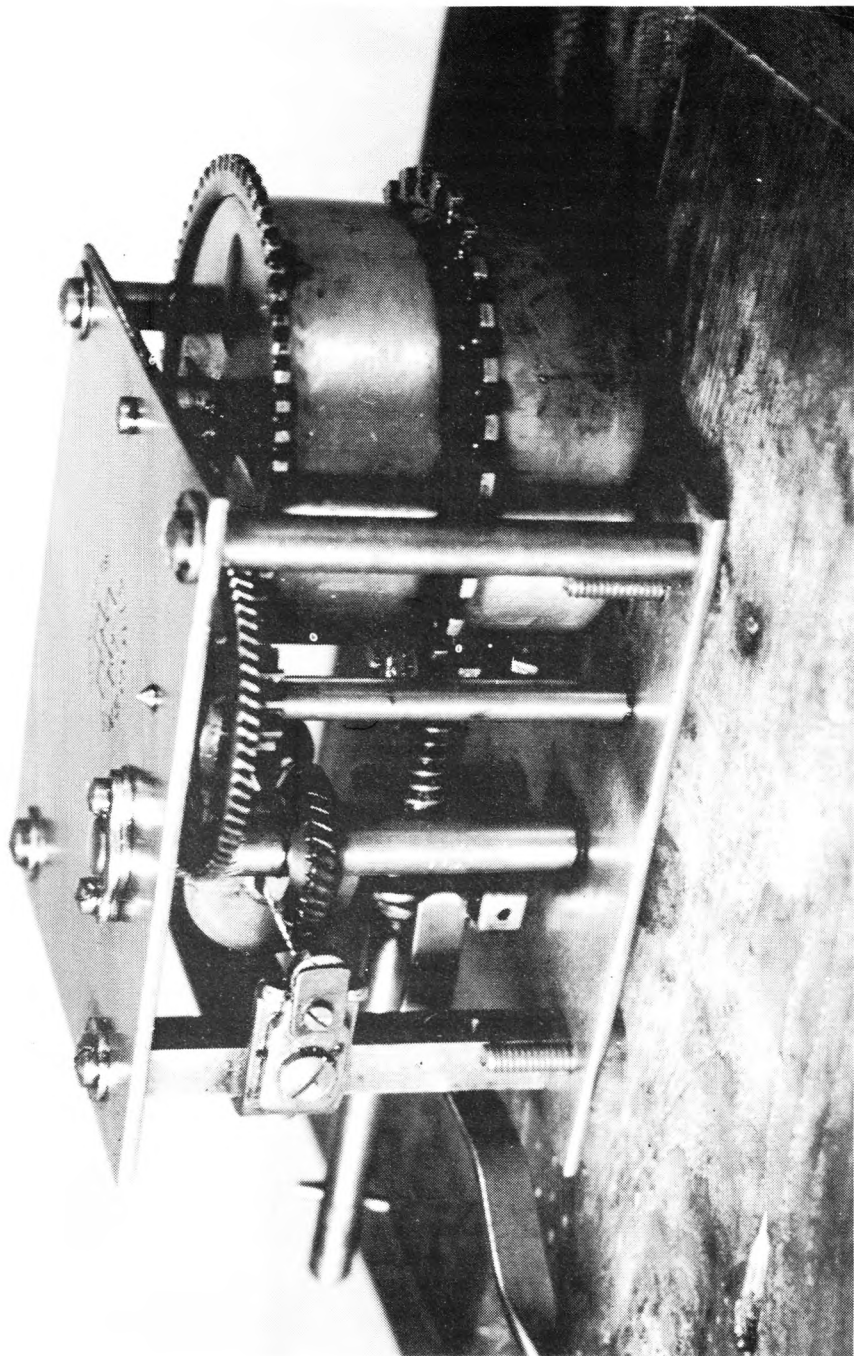
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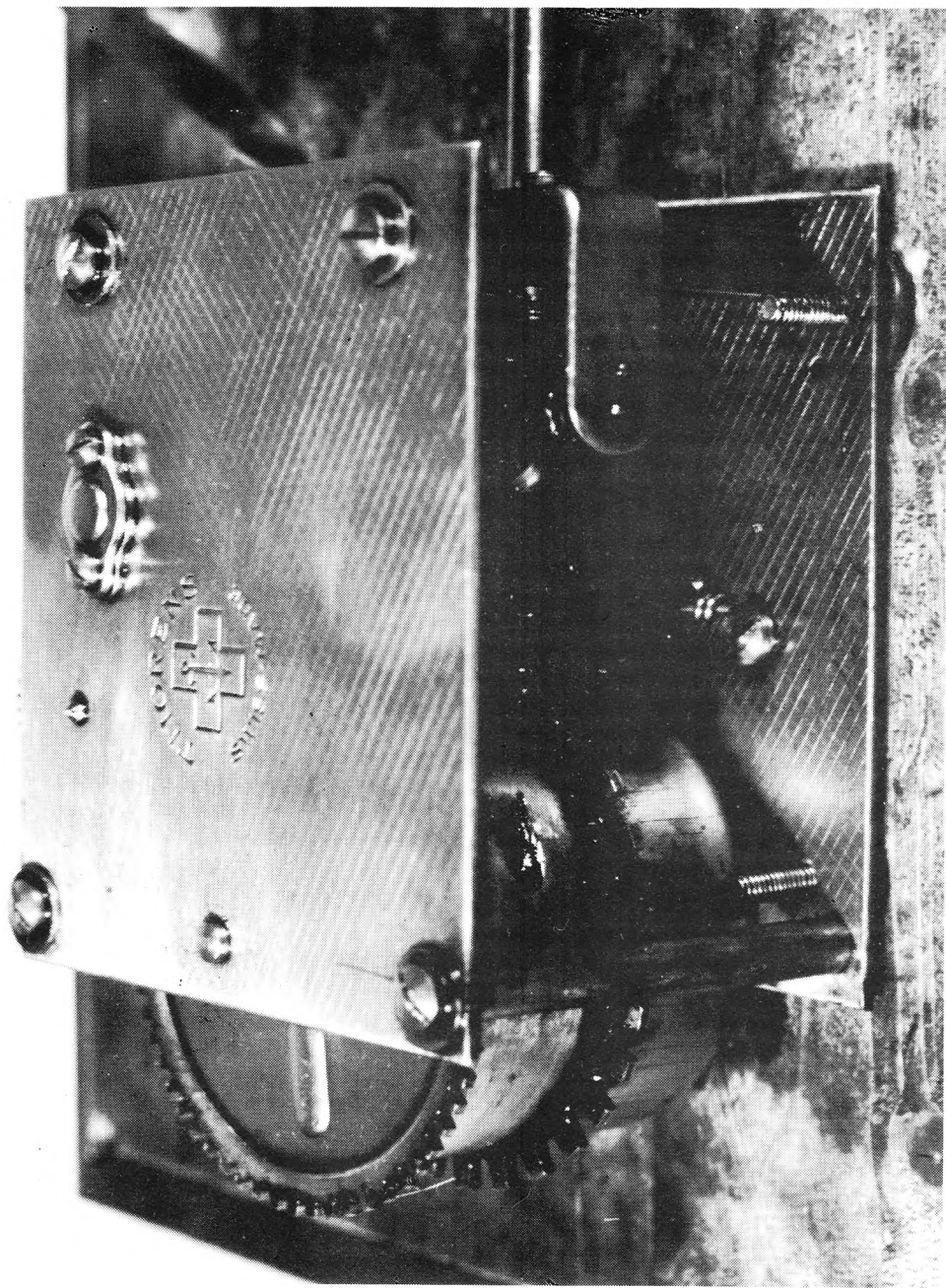
FEBRUARY

1974











# The Decca Portable

E.B. 41

We wonder what tales the Decca portable gramophone seen on the front of this issue could tell!! It was presented to the Base Field Hospital in France by Lady Aileen Mary Roberts, the daughter of Lord Roberts, together with an album of records. Although of the right vintage, the records now in the album are not the original choice.

The firm of Barnet Samuel had developed the first really portable disc player which when closed for carrying was about a foot cubed. The tone arm opens into a hollow metal shell, copper in the model we illustrate, which reflects and amplifies the sound. This model must have been the pride of the hospital where it entertained the wounded, for the chrome at the end of the tone arm has been so often polished that the word D E C C A has almost disappeared. The case is covered with an imitation leather, which, after my father had been busy with brown polish and shoe brushes, gleamed again like new. At the corners and edges are imitation stitching. For carrying, the tone arm folds into the amplifying shell, being held in place by ball bearing and spring device. The handle fits into its clip. This model, coinciding with World War I was 'made' by its convenient portability. Other makes followed the example of the Decca which held its own for popularity for many years.

With the cessation of War, the Decca remained. Modifications were introduced, such as 'strut-hinges' on the back to support the lid instead of the practical but unsightly chain. A clip device held the tone arm in the folded position instead of the ball bearing, which one assumes could become weakened with use. The reflecting shell at the back became chromed.

Our model when found has a two-spring Thorens motor, which is not the original. This is obvious for a second hole has been made for the present winding handle which is too long to sit comfortably in its clip when put away. The Thorens trade mark of an anchor in a cross can be seen. Thorens, of St. Croix, Switzerland, made phonographs and gramophones under their own name as well as supplying parts or complete machines to other dealers and entrepreneurs who put on their own names - such as Gamages the big London stores. Some others used only the Thorens motors and turntables which they built into their own cabinets. In all cases, however, the Thorens trade mark remained stamped on the exposed plate of the motor.

## Playing Berliner discs electrically — P. Adamson

The following comments, although applied mainly to Berliner discs, can of course be applied to other early records, and are based on my experience of playing them electrically.

There are basic problems encountered when Berliner records are to be reproduced electrically. Firstly, there is the difference of speed from 78 rpm. It seems that all of these discs play at 75 rpm or less; early wax-process recordings (late 1900/1901) seem to play at about 70, but the etched process records and later wax process discs are generally a little faster, about 72 being the usual speed to use. Don't be surprised to find that a disc plays at less than 70 rpm; I have a Berliner which must revolve at about 60 rpm, and two early G&T's which are not much faster. So a continuously variable-speed turntable, rather than merely adjustable (usually only about 3%), is required; such an one is the Goldring-Lenco GL75, which is what I use. ((Your Editor has a Garrard 201 which has a heavy fly-wheel rotor.)) This turntable is sufficiently low in rumble to give a good account of itself with modern stereo discs also (a budgeting consideration!)

Suitability of the stylus is the next problem. The etched discs especially have sometimes very shallow grooves whose width at stylus contact is ill-defined. I have found that

although a .0035 inch stylus is preferable for some of the wax process recordings, it is by no means universally so, and it is almost never preferable to .0025 for etched records, because of their tiny groove width. In fact, it appears that an even smaller size than 'standard' often gives better results from earlier records, especially those with too much hair in the surface (e.g. early pressings of late 1898 English discs). I have used an old stereo stylus (.0007 inch width) quite effectively for some of these with some loss of wanted sound, but a much greater loss of unwanted "crackling" and rather heavy "etched" noise. Conversely there is the disadvantage, in using oversize styli (e.g. .0035 inch), that more crackling due to surface defects, scratches, etc. is picked up, and sometimes a choice has to be made between generally better surface noise but with crackling, and a worse overall 'mush' but smooth and crackle-free. Unless one can afford to have styli ground specially for each disc, such a compromise is at times inevitable.

Having got to the stage of revolving the disc at a reasonably correct speed and picking up the tiny vibrations from it, the last problem is to amplify the wanted signal and eliminate the background crackling, swishing and bumping noises (the latter being a distinctive feature of Berliner discs). Now, at this point, I must make a digression into controversy: to those of you who never dream of playing an old disc electrically, and frown upon electronic "monkeying" with the results, I would say that acoustic reproduction relies on mechanical filtering of both bass and treble noise, not to mention "enrichment" of the original sound by resonances in the diaphragm, horn, etc.; whereas electric reproduction must rely on electric filtering (which is quite difficult, if any analogue of the acoustic method is attempted), and hopefully will add nothing in the way of "ringing" or other apparent enhancement to what is contained in the record groove. That is not to say that electrical reproduction realises the original truth any more than the acoustic method; but the original truth is not captured in the record, at least as far as actual sound goes, so that any method of playing records must try to reconstruct or simulate the truth from a very small part of it! Thus the acoustic method has some of the answers to filtering out surface noise, but there arise false (and sometimes pleasant) resonances; this difficulty hardly arises with modern audio electrical equipment (except to a small extent in loudspeakers), but this unfortunately is not designed to cope with filtering out large amounts of surface noise.

My own amplifier is the Quad 33/303 combination, which at least has a fairly comprehensive treble filter with variable turnover point (5,7,10 KHz) and slope (up to 25 dB/octave). It also has very low distortion, which is surprisingly important in reducing apparent surface noise; intermodulation products from the wide range of frequencies a modern amplifier covers can result in an increase of noise during amplification.

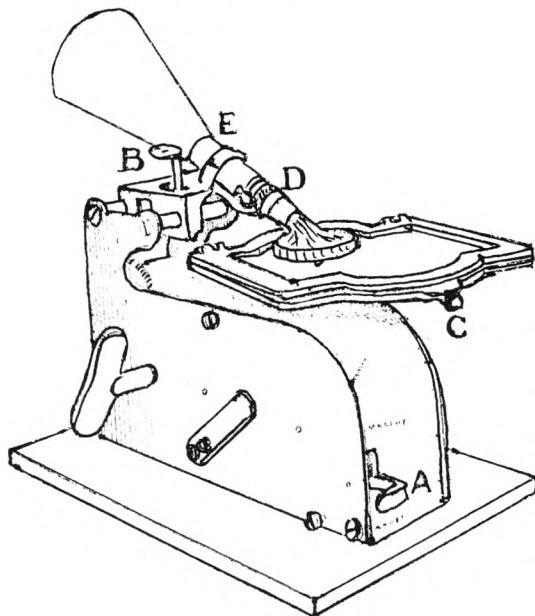
It seems that a balance must be struck between retaining what little brilliance (or harmonic content) still comes through, keeping crackle and scratch to a minimum, and not making filtering obtrusive. The obtrusive nature of excessive filtering can be quite surprising, especially with Berliner discs, where the noise level is often at least as high as the recorded sound. For instance, a record sounding both vaguely shrill and restricted in tone with the 5kHz filter full on, can sound much better with the 7kHz setting; the effect is not so much on the recorded sound (as this rarely went up to even 4kHz even by 1925), as on the surface noise itself. So, because surface noise cannot be removed entirely (with cutting out the record entirely!) it must be handled almost as carefully as the wanted sound; it must be remembered that the background noise has a much wider range of frequencies than the recording, and of course they overlap.

Back to Berliners again: these, as I said, have bumps and dents fit to drive a pickup wild; unfortunately, the Quad amplifier, although having a very low frequency (about 20Hz) rumble filter, has no other switchable circuit to deal with bumping noises. So I have to deal with this by careful use of the bass control, which of course can be set to minimum for etched discs and badly bumpy wax-process records. The effect of the treble control, by contrast, is as drastic as treble filters, as most of the clarity of the recording lies within its range; thus records can be muffled at will, which of course should only be done when the surface noise is particularly bad, and not always then - completely emasculated sounds are too easily produced in this way, as there are few resonances around to put extra life into the sound, as happens with acoustic reproduction.

With all these problems, and my own personal solutions (plus one or two other naughty electronic dodges), I often find a surprising realism emanating from my somewhat expensive equipment when playing some early records( even Berliners); and yet I do play some discs on my real gramophone (vintage 1900), and then of course the real magic of mechanical sound. reproduction steals forth, and I am whisked off to a distant era -- without electrical aids...

((Editor's note: Perhaps Mr. Adamson should have added that most Berliner discs we find these days have been subjected to damage by early steel needles in early gramophones. When one is fortunate enough to find a Berliner in fine condition, one can be surprised at the quality of the original recording. I would testify to the success of Mr. Adamson's methods as judged from the quality of a tape recording he made for me, especially of a fine copy of Morskoï singing.))

\* \* \* \* \*



## WANTED

I possess the majority of an apparatus named "Phonopostal" for making "Sonorine" postcards of which a drawing is shown. I lack the support which fixes the cards and also lack the means to fix the horn and diaphragm to the machine. Can someone sell me these parts?

## A L S O    W A N T E D

- \* Edison OPERA phonograph with original horn & Diamond A reproducer.
- \* L I O R E T phonographs.
- \* Edison C O N C E R T phonograph with original 24-inch brass horn and model D reproducer.
- \* Any R A R E phonographs or gramophones.
- \* Some 6-inch Columbia cylinders.

O.R.Schetty, Case Postale 1, CH-2012 Auvernier  
CH-2012 Auvernier, Switzerland.

## SCIENCE MUSEUM NEWS

PHONOGRAPHS TO HOLOGRAPHS: the Centenary of the Physical Society of London.

A special exhibition in the Science Museum, London, from 15th. February, 1974 & for six months.

The Physical Society was founded in 1874 by Prof. Frederick Guthrie F.R.S. "for showing new physical facts and new means for showing old ones, for making known new home and foreign discoveries". In the first decade of its existence perhaps the most striking foreign discovery the Society saw and heard was Edison's phonograph, while in 1966 a notable home discovery the development of Gabor's Nobel prize winning holograph was shown to members. A prominent place is given to a holographic portrait of Gabor in the exhibition at the Science Museum.

In a section of the exhibition devoted to the activities of members of the Society in late Victorian times an attempt is made to show them not only as distinguished investigators but also as human beings.

Many of the founder members of the Society were teachers at various levels and a section of the exhibition therefore compares and contrasts some aspects of physics teaching as it was when the Society was founded and as it is today. Much more science was taught a century ago than is commonly supposed.

The section devoted to the work of recipients of Physical Society awards includes apparatus from Cambridge University used by T.R. Wilson and Lord Rutherford. Modern Physics is exemplified by the work of Dr. Brian Josephson who predicted the effect of low temperatures in superconductors.

The exhibition is located in Gallery 65, top floor near the main lift.

## SAVOYARDS

## GEORGE BAKER

. . . . Now about George Grossmith (Senior), the Savoyard . . . .

I never saw him in a Gilbert & Sullivan opera, since he never went on tour but was always in London. However, I saw and heard him as a Society Entertainer, in which avocation he was justly famous and greatly in demand. He was short-medium in stature and wore the then fashionable drooping pince-nez. He had a quizzical look and a thin, crisp sort of voice; he was an excellent pianist and an agile little man.

His thin voice set a pattern for all the subsequent successors in his original roles in the G & S operas; even Henry Lytton modelled his performances on the George Grossmith he had understudied in his (Lytton's) young days.

C.H. Workman who played the Grossmith roles for so many years in the touring company had an individual style of his own chiefly because he had a genuinely charming quality of voice; but again, he had many of Grossmith's histrionic tricks. Sullivan knew Grossmith's vocal weakness and in concerted numbers gave him a negligible vocal line, an example of Sullivan's practical skill.



# Early versions of the Edison Tinfoil Phonograph

Phillip Petersen

From the announcement. "A Wonderful Invention - Speech Capable of Indefinite Repetition from Automatic Records," made by Edward H. Johnson, electrician, in the 17th November, issue of 'Scientific American' of 1877, the mind of man has reeled at the possibilities of recorded sound.

Having solved the mystery of the "first" sketch, dated 12th. August, 1877 (See Allen Koenigsberg, 'Edison Cylinder Records, 1889 - 1912' =New York, 1969= pp.xiii-xiv), we may turn our attention to other matters which have interested us about the early forms of an invention whose cultural impact upon the entire world has been unique. The little tin foil phonograph constructed by John Kruesi, 4-6th. December, 1877, which can be seen today at the Edison National Historic Site in West Orange, New Jersey (Fig.1.) was almost immediately improved upon by Edison, who within the same month of its invention, had already constructed a larger and more practical phonograph (Fig.2.)

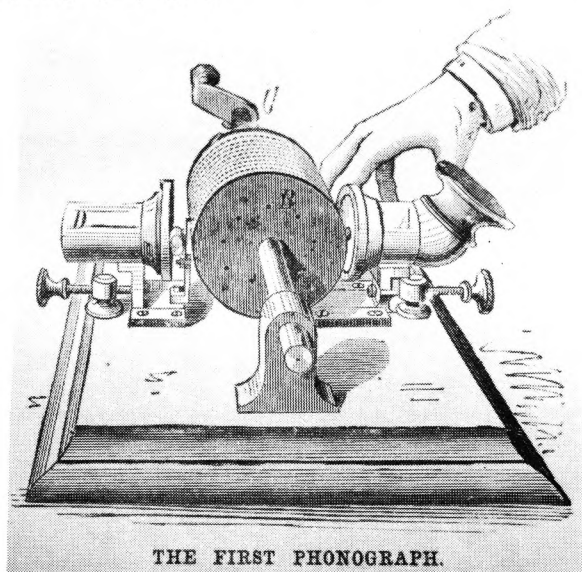


Fig.1. From 'Scientific American', 22nd. December, 1877

This second was the model used in public demonstrations of the tin foil phonograp and pictured with Edison in the well known portrait taken by Levin C. Handy, in Mathew Brady's Washington Studio. We find corroboration of the early appearance of this demonstration model in the following announcement, "Mr.Thomas Edison, the inventor of the phonograph which we recently described, informs us that he has constructed a new and larger machine which not merely speaks with all the clearness which we predicted would be obtained, but loud enough to be audible at

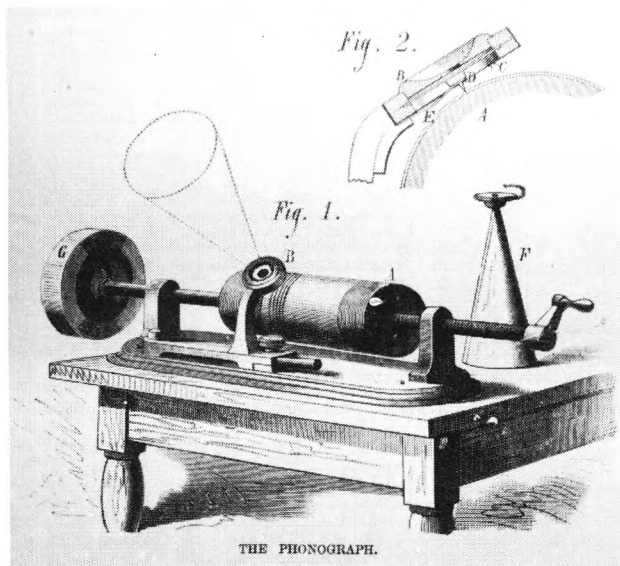


Fig.2. From 'Scientific American', 30th. March, 1878

a distance of 175 feet", 'Scientific American', 5th. January, 1878, p.3). This would appear to be the earliest documented evidence of the construction of the second version of the tinfoil phonograph. Henry Edmunds of England also reported on the second model of the tinfoil phonograph early in 1878. He had recently completed a tour of scientific inspection in the United States, where he saw demonstrated the recently invented phonograph. After describing the original, Mr. Edmunds goes on to say, "The machine we have described is the first Mr. Edison has made, but he is now constructing one to be set in motion by clockwork, the cylinder being 16 inches long." (Henry Edmunds, 'The Phonograph', 'The Times' 17th. January, 1878, p.4, cols.3-4). Shortly after when Alexander Graham Bell wrote to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in February of 1878, the phonograph he reported upon was the second model with recorder-speaker combined (See 'The Phonograph', 'Engineering', 1st. February, 1878, p.91). It is interesting that no tinfoil phonograph after the original model used separate recorder and speaker.

It will not be the purpose of this article to recount matters dealt with in chapters on the tinfoil which has already seen international circulation (See Oliver Read and Walter L. Welch, 'From Tinfoil to Stereo' = New York, 1959 = pp.11- 24: V. K. Chew, 'Talking Machines' = London, 1967 = pp.6-9 : Roland Gelatt, 'The Fabulous Phonograph', rev.ed.= New York = pp. 17- 32), but rather to bring to light little known facts of this early and elusive period. The journey has been long but fascinating through early journals and magazines, newspaper accounts long forgotten, pieces of books from another century and month by month perusal of patent gazettes.

In an interview of 16th. March, 1878, Edison, having been asked when the phonograph would be available on the market, replied that he thought that it might be commercially available within two months. The price of the finest machine would be around \$100, however, considerably less expensive models would also be available. The matrices would be for sale

like sheets of music (See 'Scientific American' Supplement No.115, 16th.March,1878, p.1828). This coincides precisely with a series of early advertisements which appeared in the 'Boston Daily Advertiser' from 11th.May 1878 until 24th.December of the same year.

HORTICULTURAL HALL.

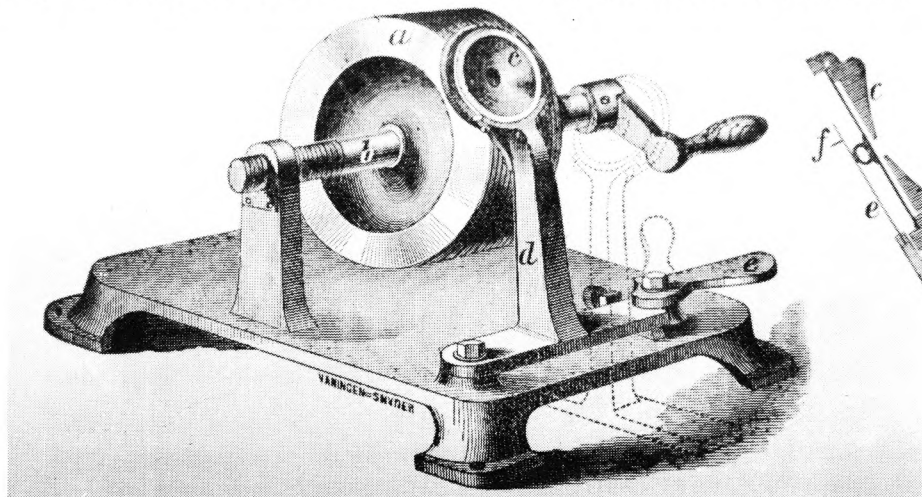
# THE EDISON SPEAKING PHONOGRAPH!

*Pronounced the Miracle of the  
Nineteenth Century.*

Exhibition open all day from 9 A.M. until 10 P. M. Ad-  
mission 25 cents. 6t\* may 14

Fig.3. From the 'Boston Daily Advertiser', 11th. May, 1878

By "less expensive models" Edison had specific reference to a smaller version of the tinfoil phonograph for home experimentation and amusement. Though most article illustrations of the tin foil phonograph of the period depict the larger demonstration model, the smaller version, characterised by the combination of fly-wheel and mandrel into a single unit appears illustrated in the April issue of the 'Journal of the Benjamin Franklin Institute' of 1878.( Fig.4.below)



Note that the threading of the axis upon which the cylinder turns has now been shifted to the left side. The Count du Moncel, accounting for several models of the tin foil phonograph introduced into France, gives special attention to this small version for sale to the general public, in which the cylinder is much shorter (The English version of his work translates 'moins long' as 'longer' !) and serves at once as mandrel and fly wheel. (See Fig.5.)

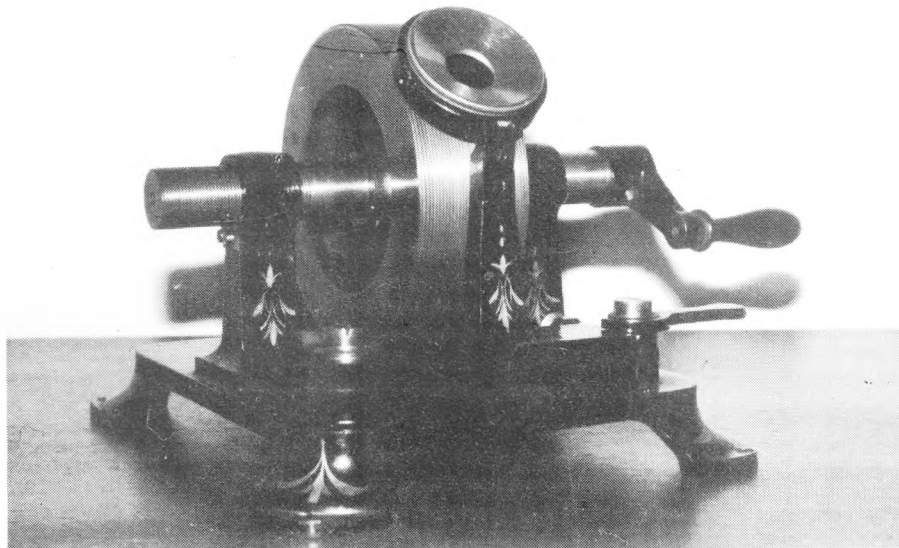


Fig.5. Phonographe Edison No.360, made by E. Hardy of Paris, 1878. From the private collection of the author.

This explains the smaller models which appear to be missing a fly-wheel! This model also differed from the demonstration model in that the tracing point could be fitted directly to the diaphragm, rather than via a small block of rubber. Note also that the threaded area of the axis is to the left as in the American model after which it was patterned. For those who are fortunate enough to find an example of this tin foil phonograph, the directions for the machine are to be found in a foot note of Du Moncel's work (See Théodore du Moncel, 'Le Téléphone, le Microphone et le Phonographe' = Paris, 1878 = pp.286-288).

Recording materials for the early phonograph, besides tinfoil, consisted of sheets of copper, soft iron and even leaden wire. Not all tin foil used for phonographic recording was equally good. The foil had to be of a definite thickness and combined with a definite amount of lead. Commercial foil, such as that used for wrapping candies, was too thin and brittle to produce good results.

Edison's first public demonstration of the phonograph occurred early in February, 1878 before the Polytechnic Association of the American Institute of Washington, D.C. The success before doubting scientists was phenomenal. At that time, Edison used reflectors to magnify the sound, so that it could be heard throughout the large room. (See 'Scientific American', 9th. February, 1878, p.86).

On 4th. March, 1878, Edison applied for a patent (Patent No. 201,760, granted



26th. March, 1878), "For reproducing the human voice, or other sounds, with greatly increased volume or force." The method involved the combination of a valve and a supply of air, gas, or steam, which under pressure in harmony with the primary sounds, would produce secondary sounds corresponding with primary sounds, but of different volume (See Fig.6.). This is

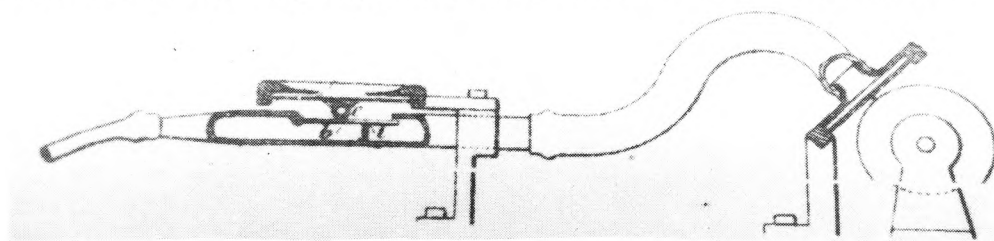


Fig.6. From the 'Patent Gazette', 26th.March, 1878

referred to in a subsequent article which states that Mr.Edison was busily experimenting upon some adaptations of compressed air, by which the sound waves might be intensified. Up to that time, the usual means of amplification was via a funnel-shaped resonator attached to the speaking orifice. Edison called his phonograph applied to steam whistles, the 'airphone' (See 'Scientific American', 30th. March, 1878, p.193). Further application of this adaptation of the phonograph was to provide station announcements from train locomotives and indeed to give voice to the Statue of Liberty.

Though referred to in early correspondence between Edison and Alfred Mayer, the leading American authority on acoustics (See Jay K. Lucker, 'The Phonograph is Now Perfect: The Edison-Mayer Letters', 'The Princeton University Library Chronicle', XXV, No.3.Spring, 1964, pp.220-224), the disc tin foil phonograph is described in detail in an article by George B. Prescott. It was with an eye to establishing absolute uniformity in the revolutions per minute that Edison devised an apparatus in which a plate replaced the cylinder. This plate, ten inches in diameter, has a spiral groove cut in its surface on both sides from its centre to within one inch of its outer edge. The arm which contained the recorder was guided by the spiral on the under side of the plate. A spring and train of gears regulated by a friction governor served to give uniformity to the movement of the plate. To make a recording, a piece of tin foil was placed on top of a piece of paper with a nine-inch centre cut out, both of which were secured at the corners by four pins and by a clamping frame hinged to the plate (See Fig.7.). Rather than disc-shaped, the turntable was actually square, though the recording area was in the shape of a disc (See George B. Prescott, 'The Telephone and the Phonograph', 'Scribner's Magazine', April, 1878, pp.848 - 858). This article was incorporated bodily and verbatim into Prescott's, better known book of similar title (See George B. Prescott, 'The Speaking Telephone, Talking Phonograph and Other Novelties' = New York, 1878 = pp. 292-308). The disc phonograph is prominently mentioned in a political, commercial and literary journal published in Yokohama for English speakers, which states, "By a recent improvement also in the phonograph the sounds will be registered on tinfoil covering a metal plate instead of as hereto fore a revolving cylinder ('The Japan Weekly Mail', 27th.April, 1878, pp.374-375). Further, it is the disc phonograph which Edison himself describes when speaking of letter writing in his article on the phonograph and its future. It seems curious that this phonograph should be documented as

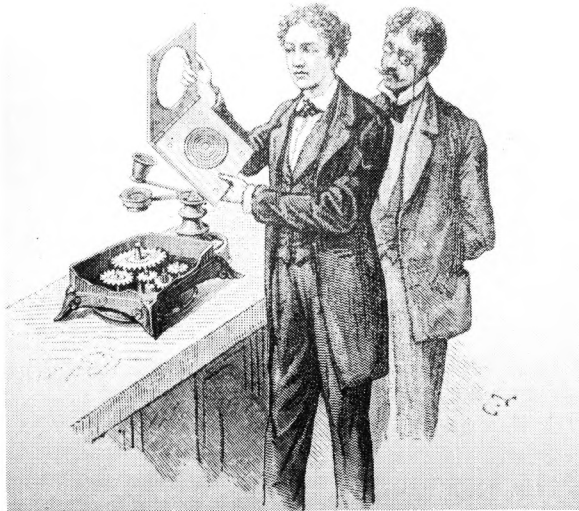


Fig.7. From Théodore du Moncel, 'Le Téléphone, le Microphone et le Phonographe' Paris, 1878

early as 22nd December, in a letter to Frank Foel (See Koenigsberg, op.cit., p.xiii), but that Edison as late as his June article refers to it as "the new form of apparatus, which the writer is now about completing... The general principles of construction are, a flat plate or disk, with spiral groove on the face, operated by clock-work underneath the plate." (Thomas A. Edison, "The Phonograph and its Future", 'The North American Review', June 1878, pp. 531-532). Of course we must keep in mind that the time interval between the writing of an article and its subsequent publication often represents a period of several months, so Edison may well have written this early in the year. It does seem strange that no example of this disc machine has been found, in view of its rather widespread and detailed reporting. We know that it was introduced into France by the Count du Moncel and we may safely assume, I believe, that it must have been introduced into England as well. Adding to this its demonstration in the United States, there must have been many models constructed. Hopefully it will constitute some future attic find!

In Supplement No.133 of the 'Scientific American' (20th July, 1878), there appeared an article with complete specifications for the construction of a working phonograph. This was, doubtless, the first "do-it-yourself" phonograph. First we find illustrated a tin foil phonograph, larger than the home commercial model referred to earlier, but exhibiting some of its features, such as the incorporation of the fly-wheel with the mandrel. This machine was guaranteed to work like any factory-manufactured phonograph. The second machine illustrated required materials which could be secured for \$1.50. This machine had the notable difference that the cylinder was made of plaster of Paris, set in a cardboard mold and grooved on the phonograph itself before the plaster, which had been allowed to soak in a coat of paraffin, had become completely set. (See Fig.8.) Copies of Supplement No.133 could be bought for ten cents at all newsdealers or by applying directly to the offices of the 'Scientific

American'. The ad., "How to make a Phonograph ran in 'Scientific American' from 2nd. November, 1878 until 16th. August, 1879.

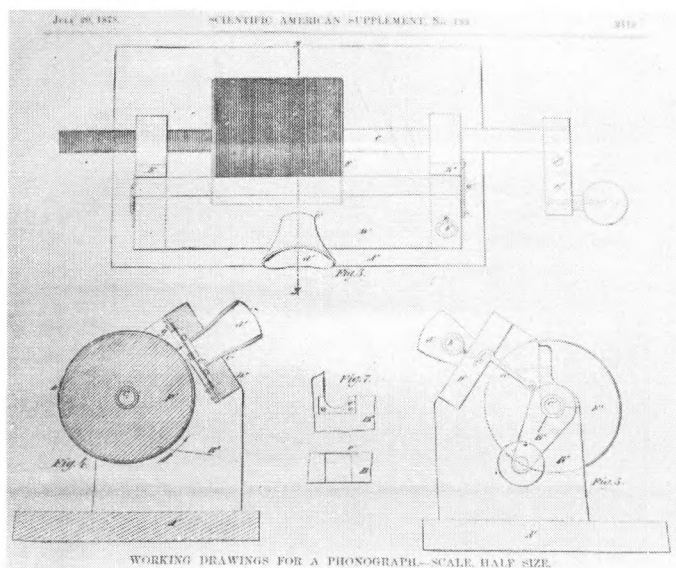


Fig.8. From 'Scientific American', Supplement No.133, 20th.July,1878

Another interesting "do-it-yourself" model was made by Shelford Bidwell of England and reported by him in the 'English Mechanic'. The frame of this machine was entirely wooden with cylinder optionally of brass or solid wood (See Fig.9. - For further detail see S.R.Bottone, 'Talking Machines and Records' =London, 1904= pp.21 - 30.

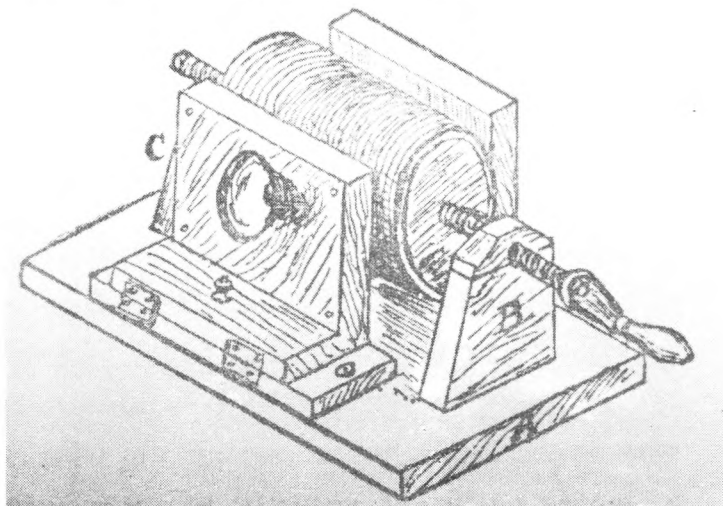
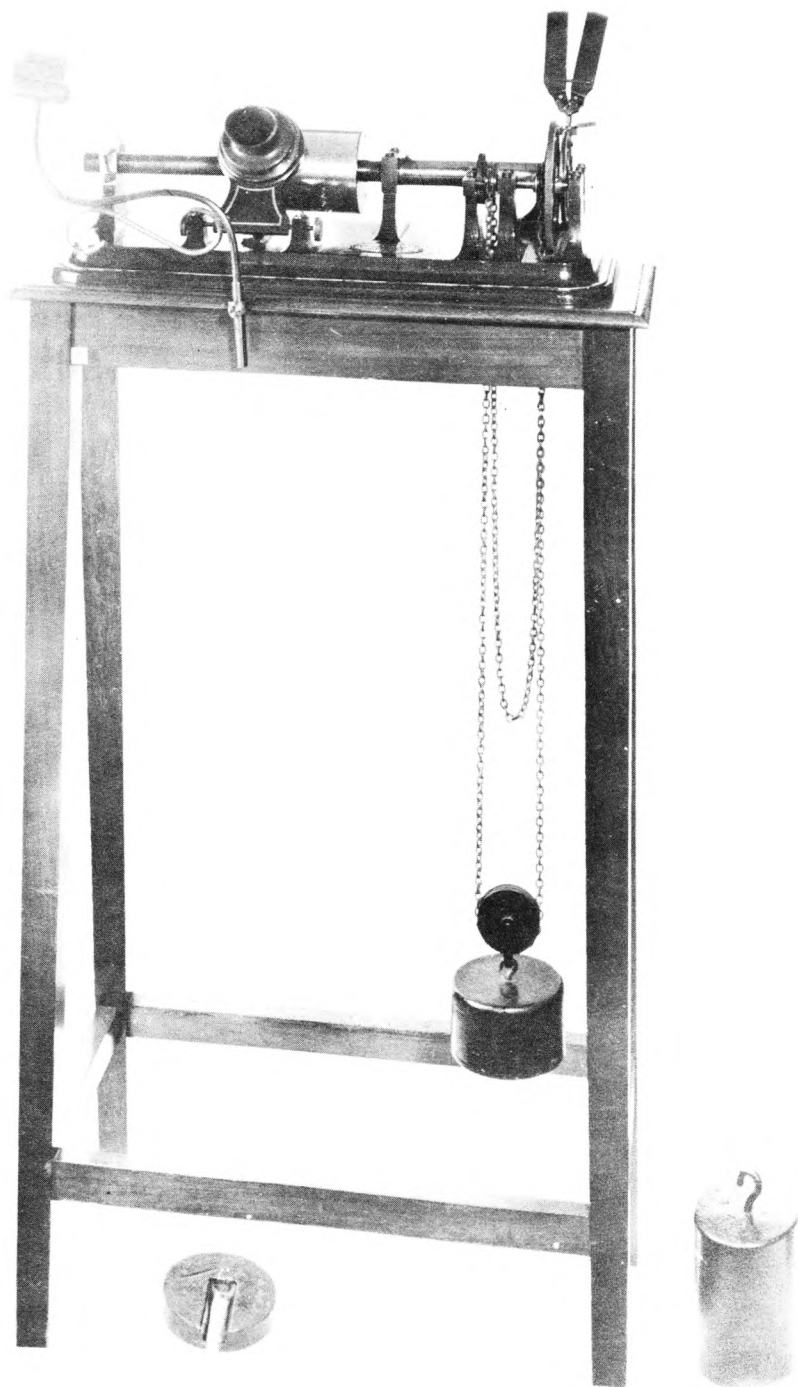
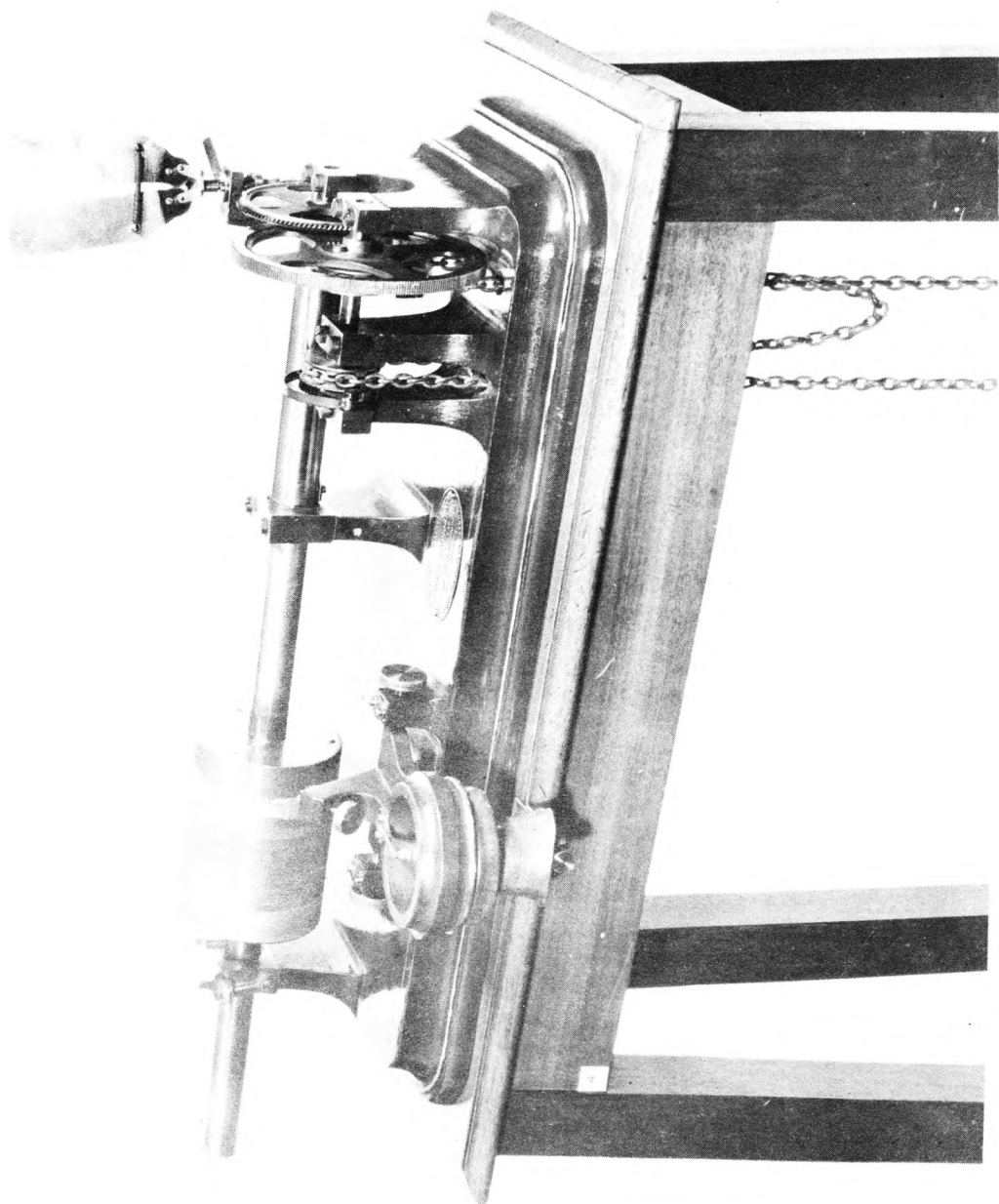


Fig.9. From S.R.Bottone, 'Talking Machines and Records. London, 1904







It has been reported that Edison experimented with various types of motive force for his early tin foil phonograph and it has long struck me that Edison, whose inventive curiosity was illimitable, would most certainly have produced also a clock-work cylinder phonograph for commercial consumption. Despite the fact that the vast majority of illustrations which are available to us in early sources are of hand-wind tin foil phonographs, we yet have the first suggestion of clock-work before the phonograph was actually invented. Turning to Johnson's early article, we find, "D is a drum revolved by clockwork, and serves to carry forward a continuous fillet of paper." ('Scientific American', 17th. November, 1877, p.304). And even the in the first announcement of the invention itself we find, "The crank handle shown in our perspective illustration of the device does not rightly belong to it, and was attached by Mr. Edison in order to facilitate its exhibition to us.... To attain this result there must be a way of driving the cylinder, while delivering the sound or speaking, at exactly the same rate as it ran while the sounds were being recorded, and this is perhaps best done by well regulated clockwork." ("The Talking Phonograph", 'Scientific American' 22nd. December, 1877, p.385). This article was republished verbatim in the 18th. January issue of 'Engineering', 1878. In an early issue of 'The Academy', a British Journal published between October, 1869 and September, 1916, we find additional reference to the existence of the clockwork cylinder tin foil phonograph, "There seems to be no doubt that Mr. Edison of New York has succeeded in realizing an instrument by which articulate speech can be recorded on a strip of tinfoil with all its modulations and inflections, and reproduced as articulate speech after any interval of time, without any loss or variation of its original character.... If now the clockwork be set in action again, the cylinder will move forward at the same rate as before..." ('The Academy', 26th. January, 1878 p. 80). The reality of a commercial clockwind tin foil cylinder phonograph is further strengthened by other sources of the day, such as, "The instrument was given some very beautiful forms, and was driven by clockwork." (Lewis J. Young, "Edison and his Phonograph" = London 1890 = rpt. Bournemouth 1970 = p.26): "It will readily be understood that, in order to obtain a perfect reproduction of the original sounds the tinfoil must travel below the diaphragm at precisely the same speed as it was turning when it was receiving the impressions, and therefore in Mr. Edison's second instrument, which we have been describing, the heavy flywheel was added to render the speed of rotation as uniform as possible; but in turning the instrument by hand it is impossible, notwithstanding this addition, to insure the surface speed of the cylinder being always the same. In order to meet this requirement, Mr. Edison has since applied clockwork mechanism for driving the apparatus with such marked success that twelve clerks were lately able to take down correctly portions of newspaper articles from dictation spoken to them by the instrument." ("The Phonograph", 'Engineering', 8th. March, 1878, pp.186-188); and, "then we have only to turn a crank, or turn a crank, or set a kind of clock-work in motion, in order at any time to hear the great ones of the earth discourse in our own parlors." ("The Phonograph", 'Harper's Weekly', 30th. March, 1878, p.249). Alfred M. Mayer, in an early article, recommended that the reproducing of speech was greatly improved by rotating the cylinder by mechanism which gave it uniformity of motion (See Alfred M. Mayer, "On Edison's Talking-Machine", 'The Popular Science Monthly', April 1878, pp.719-724). Prescott supports this in, "The articulation and quality of the phonograph, although not yet perfect, is full as good as the telephone was six months ago. The instrument, when perfected and moved by clockwork, will undoubtedly reproduce every condition of the human voice, including the whole world of expression in speech and song." (George B. Prescott, "The Telephone and the Phonograph", 'Scribner's Magazine', April 1878, p.857). Despite the obvious existence of this version of the tin foil phonograph, illustrations of Edison models which appear in the myriad sources for it, including all patent applications, show the hand-propelled form of the machine and to my knowledge, no clockwork example

made by Edison has yet been found. However, in view of this considerable testimony as to the importance of uniformity of speed, it would seem unreasonable to me that Edison should not have produced at least a small quantity of tin foil cylinder phonographs with clockwork for commercial purpose. Of course, since the early phonograph was not an instrument of high fidelity and since this phonograph has as its immediate purpose to enlighten, amaze and entertain the general public, much of the latter element coming from the very inconstancy of speed which a more serious purpose would not have condoned, the majority of machines produced were undoubtedly hand-wind. An integral part of the public demonstration and certainly of home experimentation as well was the replay at variable speed, which turned the basso into soprano and vice versa. Along with the clockwork disc tin foil phonograph, this gives the collector one more fantasy in his off-hours: the discovery of a clockwork cylinder tin foil.

In August of 1878, there appeared an ingenious version of the tin foil phonograph, given the accurately descriptive appellation "simple phonograph" (See Fig.10) It consisted of two major parts: the reproducer-recorder and the tin foil holder. Actually, it resembled the modern slide rule very much in appearance. The reproducer-recorder consisted of a mouth piece, to which was attached a thin ferrotype plate diaphragm on the underside of which was attached a small rubber block which rested upon the centre of the diaphragm. As seen in the

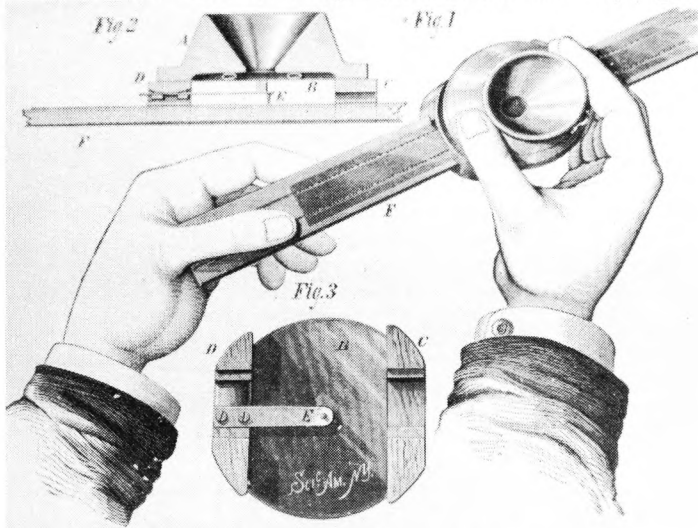
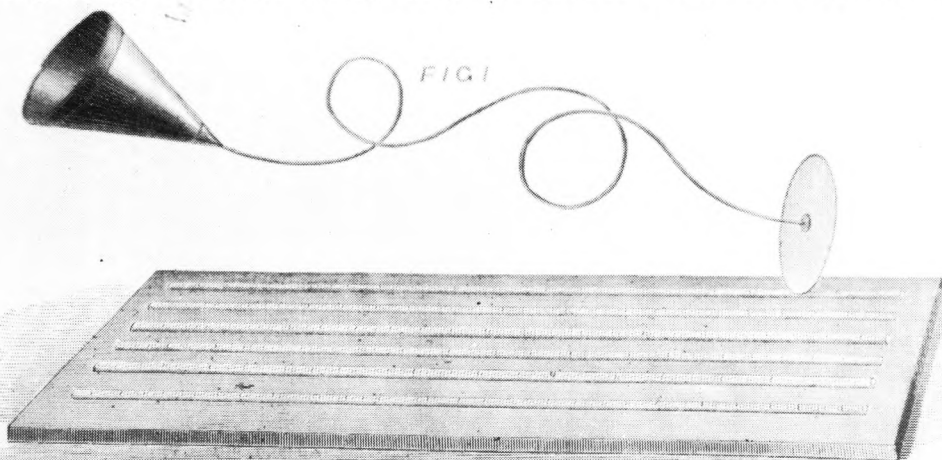


Fig.10. From 'Scientific American' 24th. August, 1878

illustration, the needles, attached to a spring, rested directly upon that rubber block, in order to receive the vibrations of the voice for indentation upon the tin foil which passed beneath. The wooden strip, having two longitudinal grooves was so constructed that the needle, which was slightly to one side, would pass directly over one groove in one direction and over the other in the opposite direction. The tin foil, as in the case of the cylinder machine, was attached to the wooden strip with beeswax. The needle was then adjusted so as to indent the foil slightly as the wooden stick was passed under it. Of course, for playback, one simply ran the tin foil under the needle again, and with the aid of an improvised paper funnel, there was the wonder of sound. The author of this little variation even suggested that it was

possible to record the sounds on a plain strip of wood so that they might be reproduced. (See "A Simple Phonograph", 'Scientific American', 24th August, 1878, p.118).

Another early attempt to demonstrate the principles of the phonograph at low cost was made by M. Lambrigt, an inspector of telegraphs in the south of France. The very simple apparatus gained its name "sixpenny phonograph" from the fact that it could be sold for that amount, leaving profit for the manufacturers. The instrument was introduced into England by a Mr. Hospitalier, a man dedicated to physical electrical science. The reproducing apparatus consisted of a hollow cone of cardboard about one and a half inches in diameter, whose apex was connected to a cardboard disc by means of a lead wire about sixteen inches long. The second piece of apparatus consisted of a small rectangular board to which one or many short sections of lead wire were attached, whose upper surface contained an embossed recording (See Fig.11.). In order to play the recording, one simply put the cone to the ear, which served as resonator and concentrator, with one hand and with the other, drew the edge of a cardboard disc along the upper surface of the lead wire. The vibrations created in the cardboard disc



### A SIXPENNY PHONOGRAPH.

Fig.11. From 'Engineering' 18th April, 1879

were then communicated by the connecting wire to the conical earpiece. The reproducing aspects of this instrument were quite simple and it was in this form that it would be sold. The making of the lead recording was complex and it must be assumed that this would be accomplished by the manufacturer and not by the purchaser. The recording unit consisted of a convex formation of stearine wax shaped upon a long rectangular surface of glass or other rigid material. Over this wax formation was passed a simple phonographic instrument, more sophisticated, but in principle similar to the 'simple phonograph' described above. However, instead of a needle affixed to the centre of the recording diaphragm, there was attached a thin flat plate whose lower end was cut out in a concave curve to fit the convex surface of the stearine. As words were spoken, this flat plate or bar was passed over the stearine,



leaving in it impressions of the vibrating diaphragm. The stearine bar was then coated with a fine surface of plumbago and electro-plated with copper. Removing the wax, one was left with a negative firm copper-lined matrix, into which was placed a lead wire, which, when pressed together received the impressions set in the master in a "permanent" form. These wires were then placed upon the rectangular board ready for repeated reproduction of sound. It would be feasible to make quantities of these wires for sale individually, to be placed upon sixpenny phonographs already purchased (See "A Sixpenny Phonograph", 'Engineering', 18th. April, 1879, p.326). Of course, this phonograph was not an invention but an adaptation. Edison had already indicated a plan of producing a phonogram on stearine surface, later to be electro-plated in copper. The originality of the little instrument was in having offered a simple and inexpensive instrument which was financially within the reach of the general public for the purpose of demonstrating scientific principles which might ultimately lead to scientific investigation. Du Moncel refers to this phonograph, but his description is vague and without illustration.

The tin foil was first officially presented to France to the Academie des Sciences by the Count Theodore Achille Louis du Moncel on 11th. March, 1878, with the aid of Edison's personal agent, Theodore Puskas, whose brother Karl represented Edison in Budapest, Hungary. Though at first it was received with unbridled enthusiasm and admiration, this soon gave way to doubt and fear of chicanery. With further demonstration, however, all doubt was erased and the little machine was accepted for what it was, a miracle. (See Theodore du Moncel, op.cit pp.279-281).

Mr. William Preece had the distinction of presenting to the English people the first public exhibition of the tin foil phonograph. Though referred to at the end of a demonstration lecture on the telephone (1st. February, 1878), the phonograph was first presented as the subject matter of an entire demonstration on 27th. February, 1878, at a meeting of the Society of Telegraph Engineers, of which Mr. Preece was vice-president. (See report of this Society in 'Engineering' 8th. March 1878). The occasion was both interesting and unique in that it presented three differing versions of the tin foil. The first was a facsimile of the original phonograph with separate speaker and reproducer, made by W. Pidgeon an amateur who constructed his machine from descriptions received from the United States. The speaker had the customary metallic diaphragm and the reproducer a paper one, capable of reproducing sounds which might be too small in force to be transmitted otherwise by the tin foil machine. The second was the improved tin foil phonograph which arrived in England by the personal hand of Theodore Puskas (cited as 'Puskus' in the article), and the third the superb and highly analytical tin foil phonograph constructed by Augustus Stroh, who used a clockwork motor controlled by falling weight (See Fi.12.). Augustus Stroh is not to be confused with his son Charles Stroh, who in 1901 produced a violin with an aluminium plate instead of a body and a trumpet bell designed for recording purposes and known as the 'Stroh violin'.

The surface speed of the cylinder was controlled by a governor consisting of two circular discs of brass mounted on a vertical fly-shaft on which they were pivoted (See "The Phonograph", 'Engineering', 8th. March, 1878, pp.186-188). The efforts of the British to develop the tin foil phonograph were obviously quite serious. Chew reports that the first successful attachment of a spring motor to the tin foil phonograph was achieved in 1883 by George Greenhill, using a spring motor manufactured by William Fitch and Son (See V.K. Chew, op.cit., p.9).

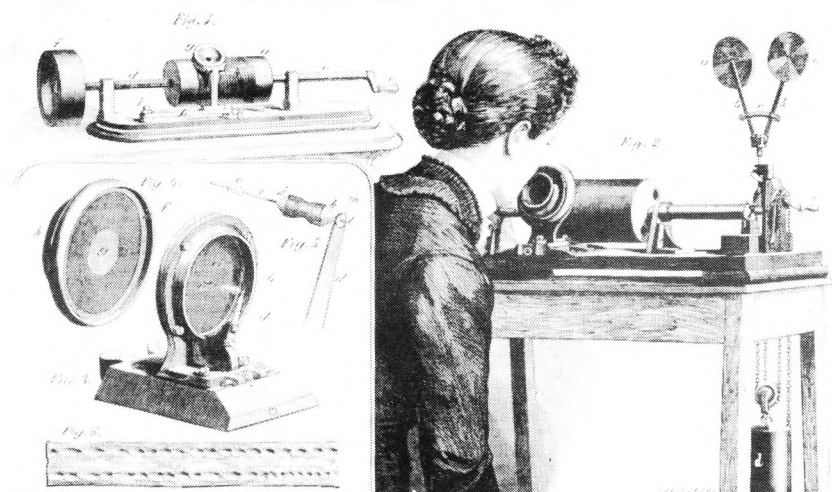


Fig.12. From 'The Illustrated London News' 3rd August, 1878

The last patent application made by Edison for a modification to the tin foil phonograph was applied for on 29th March, 1879 (Patent No. 227,679, issued 18th May, 1880). It had as its purpose the protection of tin foil from injury and the elimination of unnecessary handling. The patent specified a cylinder with detachable end so that a roll of tin foil could be inserted. The tin foil would then be drawn through a horizontal slot in the cylinder and secured by a bar which formed part of the periphery of the cylinder. The bar or lever could be swung out of the slot at any time to allow foil to be drawn through and wrapped around the cylinder, after a previously recorded portion had been removed.

This patented modification accounts for a feature in later versions of the tin foil phonograph, in which the cylinder has a horizontal slot with insertable wedge to smooth and secure the foil.

Though the immediate craze for sound recording waned after initial demonstrations and home experimentation, the tin foil phonograph continued to be produced with various modifications at least until 1887, when Edison, turning his attention again to the phonograph, produced the Improved Phonograph, which rendered its tin foil antecedent obsolete.

\* \* \* \* \*

The two illustrations in the centre of this article give two views of a gravity-driven tin foil phonograph made by the London Stereoscopic Company. Phonographs of this type were sold in London until about 1882. This example is in the collection of E.M.I.Ltd., by whose courtesy we reproduce the pictures. It has been preserved in very fine condition.

# THE PHONOGRAPH

59

The phonograph, the phonograph,  
'Tis a wonderful thing, the phonograph;  
But what happened to me will make you laugh,  
When I brought home a new phonograph.

I felt rather gay,  
So I thought I'd essay  
How a kiss would come out  
In a phonograph way.  
I said, "Oh, you darling! delighted to meet you,  
With a chaste osculation permit me to greet you;"  
Then I fired off a regular volley of kisses  
Like a parting salute of a school of young misses.  
But Jane, who at that moment came in at the door,  
And never had heard such a sound there before,  
Said, "Oh, Sir, how can you? What are you doing?"  
"Oh, Jane! " I exclaimed, "there is mischief a-brewing.  
How could you with such indiscretion address me,  
Why not in some silent way seek to repress me?  
As sure as your mistress comes home from her walking  
This horrid machine will set to a-talking;  
And things will be lively 'tween you and your missis,  
From when, after 'darling' and hundreds of kisses,  
Your voice exclaims, 'Oh, sir!' and 'what are you doing?'  
She'll be sure to suppose it was you I was wooing."  
"Oh, drat it!" cried Jane, as she lifted her broom,  
"If I'd known it I wouldn't have entered the room!  
But I'm sure I won't let such an insinuation  
Be the means of my losing a good situation.  
And if there's no other way out of it, dash it!  
I'll give it a crack with my broom and I'll smash it."  
  
And crash to the floor, broken in half,  
Fell the wonderful phonograph.

- - - - -

We are grateful to Mr. J. Goslin who loaned us the book "Bunkum Entertainments" by Robert Ganthony from which the above poem was taken. Mr. Ganthony was an entertainer who, in 1895, published a book on conjuring, juggling, panorama, second sight, performing fleas, etc. One of his entertainments included a sketch on what he called 'The Funnygraph', which was a box from which protruded a funnel, an egg-cup tied by a string for a recording tube, and two babies 'dummies' for listening tubes. With this equipment as 'props', Mr. Ganthony indulged in various jokes and comical conversations, to and from the 'Funnygraph'. We imagine that his act was similar to others on the topic of the phonograph - which was still an amazing new invention.

To complete the listing of the H.M.V. C series, Michael Smith hopes that readers will be kind enough to search through their records to supply the matrix and 'single-face' numbers of the records listed below. If you are uncertain about these numbers, please send all little numbers you can see on the label and in the shellac around the label. Please indicate to which side each set of details applies:-

C. 104, 114, 116, 117, 128, 136, 140, 148, 152, 153, 156, 158, 160, 161, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 177, 178, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 190, 195, 199, 201, 206, 208, 214, 215, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 228, 232, 235, 236, 238, 243, 246, 249, 251, 252, 253, 256, 265, 266, 268, 269, 274, 276, 279, 280, 284, 287, 291, 292, 293, 296, 297, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 307, 308, 309, 311, 313, 315, 317, 320, 322, 324, 325, 327, 328, 329, 334, 335, 341, 342, 344, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 352, 356, 357, 360, 362, 364, 366, 367, 368, 371, 372, 373, 374, 377, 380, 381, 383, 385, 386, 387, 390, 392, 394, 398, 401, 404, 408, 409, 417, 419, 421, 422, 420, 424, 430, 435, 436, 442, 446, 448, 456, 458, 460, 462, 464, 465, 467, 469, 470, 472, 476, 477, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 488, 490, 491, 496, 503, 504, 505, 507, 508, 511, 514, 520, 521, 522, 525, 524, 537, 558, 561, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 587, 588, 598, 599, 600, 601, 604, 608, 613, 616, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 629, 630, 637, 638, 639, 642, 644, 645, 651, 652, 654, 655, 656, 659, 660, 661, 662, 666, 667, 671, 675, 677, 679, 682, 684, 687, 689, 690, 691, 692, 694, 695, 697, 700, 702, 705, 706, 708, 709, 711, 714, 716, 718, 723, 728, 730, 731, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 746, 747, 750, 752, 753, 754, 758, 759, 761, 762, 763, 768, 769, 770, 771, 774, 775, 776, 780, 781, 788, 789, 791, 792, 795, 796, 797, 798, 801, 802, 805, 813, 815, 819, 822, 824, 826, 834, 836, 838, 840, 843, 849, 850, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 864, 866, 871, 872, 897, 899, 902, 904, 907, 908, 916, 919, 922, 926, 931, 933, 936, 938, 939, 943, 948, 949, 952, 954, 955, 956, 960, 965, 969, 970, 971, 972, 976, 979, 985, 986, 990, 997, 999, 1000, 1004, 1008, 1009, 1020, 1025, 1041, 1048, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1073, 1074, 1077, 1091, 1094, 1100, 1106, 1112, 1113, 1121, 1123, 1151, 1154, 1165, 1171, 1176, 1181, 1201, 1206, 1213, 1216, 1219, 1241, 1243, 1264, 1272, 1350, 1372, 1375, 1381, 1383, 1384, 1385, 1393, 1396, 1412, 1416, 1417, 1418, 1422, 1424, 1430, 1431, 1432, 1434, 1441, 1472, 1478, 1508, 1509, 1530, 1534, 1535, 1536, 1539, 1552, 1622, 1623, 1627, 1635, 1640, 1643, 1683, 1696, 1700, 1707, 1708, 1741, 1751, 1755, 1758, 1767, 1778, 1790, 1809, 1823, 1829, 1839, 1851, 1852, 1890, 1899, 2044, 2075, 2077, 2084, 1091, 2094, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2178, 2187, 2193, 2231, 2242, 2265, 2283, 2301, 2371, 2395, 2404, 2505, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2591, 2600, 2641, 2653, 2672, 2732, 2741, 2804, 2833, 2999, 3138, 4277, 4280. Also, titles, artistes, matrices of H.M.V. C1 - C100.

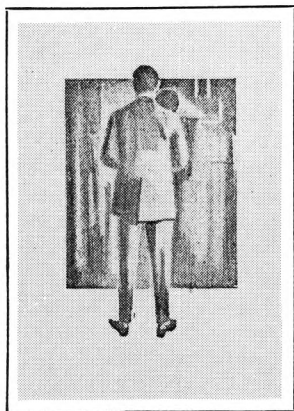
Kindly send all details to Mr. Michael Smith, 29, Brockenhurst Close, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0HG.

## small discs

Since Mr. Haines' article on small discs in 'Talking Machine Review' 20/21, several readers have contributed interesting letters. We shall feature this topic again in our next issue. If you have any unusual small discs, or advertising discs of interest we should like to hear of them.

## Saturne

Also in 'Talking Machine Review' 20/21 we showed the illustrative 'picture' records issued by Saturne. We have been loaned a catalogue by Mr. I. Davies. It is dated October, 1951 and the owner of the label was the Société des Arts et Sciences Appliquées of 5, Avenue Bertie Albrecht, Paris 8. The company had begun to issue long-playing discs as well as 'ordinary' 78 rpm discs and its series "A Images" of which the makers claim that the pictures are evocative of the music upon them. Every type of music seemed to be available plus 'disques Israélites' and 'disques Arabes'. Three little pictures show the recording studio, the exterior looking like a large house in a large garden with, perhaps, an ornamental pond in front. Other little pictures show some records, but from the variety of illustrations we cannot guess what music is featured on those discs.



# HERE IS THE MAN WHO DINED WITH THE KAISER

‘RECORDING’  
HIS SPEECH  
ON

## ‘His Master’s Voice’

THE accounts of conditions ruling the land of our enemies by this unobserved observer have created something of a sensation. The gentleman has now “recorded” his speech on “His Master’s Voice” so that you can hear the relation of his adventures at first hand.

This is a beautifully clear record and well worth having and keeping as a piece of history.

SPEECH—by the MAN WHO DINED  
WITH THE KAISER

**No. 01130. 12 inch Record. 5/6**

A HISTORICAL RECORD  
OF EXTRAORDINARY INTEREST



We know nothing about this record except that it is an entry in the catalogue and that the Gramophone Company published the above advertisement. If anyone can furnish a tape recording of it or any other relevant information your Editor will be delighted.

'MOONLIGHT SERENADE' by John Flower

A bio-discography of the Glenn Miller Civilian Band: Published by Arlington House, New Rochelle, New York. Price \$10.00

This review is written by a fool who had the opportunity to have a buffet-supper with Glenn Miller after one of his Army Band performances in Britain during World War II, and who deferred the chance to a suggested later date . . . which sadly never came. The reason we known too well . . .

A legend has grown up and deservedly so. Play some of the first recordings of Glenn Miller's Band then compare with those made after he "found" the style for which he was striving. You will see immediately why that style raised his name from the ordinary to the extraordinary.

When studying a cold discography one has no perspective of the artist being spotlighted. By interweaving a diary of events and playing engagements one obtains from Mr. Flower's narrative a better view of the man himself and his musicians. The grass did not grow under their feet - but thousands of miles as they toured. Then there were busy sessions in the radio and recording studios. We know the results of the recording sessions but now in addition we have comprehensive listings of tunes played during such important radio broadcasts as the Chesterfield Shows, some of which have subsequently appeared on L.P. discs.

An important section of the book is the "Index to Tune Titles" which is essential when wishing to see if/when/on what a particular title was recorded. I always test the index of a new book using something I do know and with something I wish to know. From one of the Chesterfield Shows I "tested" the tune 'Harlem Chapel Bells' which I did not know prior to hearing the L.P. reissue; no wonder, it appears to have been recorded only at one such Show.

There is much new material here for the Miller fan - including the number of each tune in the Miller library of scores. This is, and will remain, a definitive book on Glenn Miller for those taking the subject seriously. It is a massive meticulous compilation in which the author honestly admits of which facts he is uncertain. Yes, of course there are pictures, from 'behind the scenes' and 'on the sets'. Commencing with April, 1935 and ending with Glenn Miller's enlistment into the army in October, 1942 takes 486 pages. So much was achieved in so few busy years. . . I am sure that I would have bought this book had not the review copy arrived quickly!

'THE COMPLETE ENTERTAINMENT DISCOGRAPHY'

from the mid-1890s to 1942

Price \$12.95

by Brian Rust with Allen G. Debus

Published by Arlington House, New Rochelle, N.Y.

I feel that the title is unfortunate for "clever" individuals immediately set about to prove its INCOMPLETENESS. I am one of them! I found a few omissions purely because I have, or had the discs missed!

However, those omissions are mere crumbs from a large loaf when compared with the overwhelming details which ARE in the neatly typed 676 pages mostly with recording dates of the sessions listed.

Owing to Jazz, Dance Band, etc. discographies in existence or preparation, the compilation includes minstrel pioneers, vaudevillians, radio personalities, actors, actresses of American birth or those from 'overseas' who became well-known in U.S.A. Although not told



so in the introduction, (except in such cases as Victor Herbert, Rudolph Friml, George Gershwin) 'popular entertainment' does not include xylophonists, banjoists, trumpeters, violinists, etc. I have been in very large Music Halls where ovations indicated that such performers were popular. Perhaps this is another reflection on the title chosen.

Getting back inside the covers, it is already a book I would not be without. It is not confined to recordings made originally in U.S.A. All known recordings of the artists included are listed, (except, oddly, Carmen Miranda). I have thought of many obscure recordings - but they're all included. I was lucky to find the few omissions I did.

Of the better known artists we have what must be full listings of the records of such as Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Mills Brothers, Sophie Tucker, Andrews Sisters, Bert Williams, Al Jolson, Gene Austin, Kate Smith, etc.,

Admittedly the number of 'overseas' artists is more limited. Included, for example, are Al Bowlly, George Lashwood, Vesta Tilley, Noël Coward, Gracie Fields, Carl Brisson, Greta Keller, Josephine Baker, (Excuse me, she began in U.S.A.!), Jean Sablon. There are more....

Essential, too, are some almost forgotten, important, but sometimes little-recorded, stars like, Edna May, Fred Hillebrand, Josie Sadler, Emma Carus, De Wolf Hopper, Anna Chandler, Fred Duprez, Joseph Jefferson, Lillian Russell (whose only known surviving record is mercifully preserved on L.P.), Stella Mayhew, Marshall P. Wilder, Nat M. Wills. (These are some of the artists with which I "tested" this book!)

Messrs. Rust and Debus have also included complete details of cylinder recordings too, (except for poor Yvette Guilbert!), which will be invaluable to readers specialising in cylinders. Some who are mentioned above were almost solely recorded on cylinders. One whose output was large but mainly on cylinders was Manuel Romain.

Whether you are interested in "popular" vocalists of the crooning, music hall, or vaudeville, this important book is a MUST for you. Buy it. You will use it so much that it will become thumb marked! I am sure that when you first obtain it you will not know where to look first you'll be so busy trying to date so many records!

## RECORD REVIEWS

E. B.

SAGA PAN 6903. COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA. Transcriptions of the broadcast from the Savoy Ballroom. 30th. June, 1937.

Moten Swing (a fragment); Shout & Feel it; The you and me that used to be (voc. Jimmy Rushing); The Count steps in; They can't take that away from me; I'll always be in love with you; When my dreamboat comes home (voc. Jimmy Rushing); Swing brother swing; Bugle blues.

This record is positively for the Basie fanatic who must have every recording, even the "low-fi". We assume this to have been from some of John Hammond's own personal recordings "off the air". It has the tone of a home recording from a cheap three-valve superhet.

By obtaining a booking for this little-known band from Kansas City in New York's Savoy Ballroom, John Hammond introduced the world to the Count Basie Band whose insistent rhythm was a compelling force that took it immediately to the top rank of 'swing bands'.

Recorded a week before Basie's first Decca recordings it gives us a glimpse of how it sounded direct from the Savoy Ballroom. It affords some interesting soli from Lester Young, Herschel Evans, Buck Clayton and the Count himself. In "Dreamboat" one hears some nice 'press-roll' drumming from Jo Jones. Billie Holiday is heard singing "Swing Brother" and "Can't Take". Although not mentioned on the record sleeve, Jimmy Rushing sings a couple of numbers.

When this record was made, Billie Holiday was around sixteen years old, as was Ella Fitzgerald then already recording with Chick Webb's band. In my opinion, these two girls plus Bing Crosby during the 1930's brought about a complete change in the style of dance band singing, (although they did not realise it themselves at the time).

If you are not fully acquainted with the style of Count Basie's Band and its artists in the 1930's this record is not for you. You should confine yourself to the Decca (Brunswick in British Isles) issues. If you are a Basie addict and can ignore the lowfi you will find these different versions of familiar tunes interesting.

SAGA PAN 6902 DUKE ELLINGTON ORCHESTRA. Transcriptions of Duke Ellington's second concert in the Carnegie Hall. 11th. December, 1943.

The Star Spangled Banner; Take the A Train; Moon Mist; Tea for Two; Honeysuckle Rose; excerpts from Black, Brown and Beige; Ring Dem Bells; Jack the Bear; Do Nothing Till You Hear from me (vocal Al Hibbler; Black and Tan Fantasy.

Duke Ellington commences his concert with the National Anthem, played correctly, but in an orchestration not played by others. (We wish his version of the British National Anthem could be recorded too!) While changes in personnel in the Ellington Band are gradual and infrequent they have brought a different tone timbre with the passing years. Thus in this record we catch a few men who stayed just a short while but added their individuality at the time. Taft Jordan was one such. Here he contributes a fine muted trumpet improvisation on "Tea for Two" and later Wallace Jones plays superbly in "Black and Tan Fantasy" - the long-lived Ellington warhorse, sounding as fresh as ever. Son Mercer Ellington's 'tone poem' "Moon Mist" is delicately treated by Ray Nance (violin) and Johnny Hodges (saxophone). We hear the Duke himself explaining his then fairly new "Black Brown & Beige" suite to his audience, in which Rex Stewart was featured. Mr. Ellington sounded a little formal in his comments at this concert, of which this record must be but a part. In later years he has allowed his humour a freer rein.

The quality of recording is better on this record. It has raised to 'mediumfi'. Quite tolerable listening. It represents a milestone in Ellington's career and was made during the war years which were somewhat lean for Ellington recordings. Again, more for the specialist than for someone just dipping into Ellingtonia.

Both of the foregoing are in SAGA PAN'S "Immortal Sessions" series. One assumes them all to be privately recorded on acetate 78's originally. Both have on the sleeve the same stupid notes titled "The Saga History of Jazz" which are irrelevant to the music contained on the record. A mere paragraph is devoted to the content.

SAGA records disappeared from the market, but they have returned with a full catalogue of what was previously available. The two above are described as 'stereo', meaning the sound has been spread on to two channels equally so that both of your loudspeakers sound alike! Presumably all of their catalogue has been similarly revamped.... which includes a whole pile of operatic reissues mainly from Commander Hardwick's collection, a fair proportion of which were from Fonotipia.

## Research

Please send me details of any K L I N G S O R, P I L O T, or P O L Y P H O N records that you have. When sending, please include any matrix or control numbers to be seen on the label or in the area around the label. Have you any catalogues to loan? Ernie Bayly, 19, Glendale Road, Bournemouth BH6 4JA.

## RECORD      REVIEWS

F. ANDREWS

'THE EARLY DAYS'      Historic Recordings by Great Orchestras and Great Conductors.

A boxed set of five L.P. records with a seventeen page illustrated booklet which includes photographs of conductors, composers, orchestras and concert buildings. The whole set is presented by Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft as part of their 75th. Anniversary Celebrations. It costs £7.50, the records detailed below are unavailable separately.

First Record 2563247. Side 1. This has Arthur Nikisch conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orch. in a performance of Beethoven's 5th. Symphony, in C minor, and which was recorded in 1913 on Deutsche Grammophon matrices 1249s to 1256s, the eight sides comprising a set of records numbered 040784 to 040791. At this time Deutsche Grammophon A.G. was controlled from England by its parent company 'The Gramophone Company Ltd' and the records were sold in the British Isles as single-sided discs, being released in instalments as 'H.M.V.' records; they were later to be coupled as double-sided records in the black labelled series D89 - D92.

As a consequence of World War I, Deutsche Grammophon A.G. became an independent company which began to build up its own international business and the remainder of the records in this boxed set are from the 78 rpm records which were released under their new POLYDOR label whose trade mark was the "Head listening to two Loud-Speakers".

2563247. Side 2., is devoted to an orchestral version of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 1. and Berlioz's overture "Carnaval Romain", both pieces again being played by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Nikisch, recorded in 1920 and from Polydors 69566/7 and 69658 respectively.

These works conducted by Nikisch are the only three acoustically recorded items among the records under review and are truly historical recordings in the sense that one would not listen to them with any expectations of hearing the orchestral sounds in any way similar to that of a symphony orchestra in a concert hall. The interest of collectors in these acoustical recordings, lies not in the fact that it is the music of Beethoven or Liszt, or whoever, nor that they may (or may not) have been well played and interpreted, but that here at last was a famous orchestra under a famous conductor committing to "wax" some extended works of the great composers of our European culture, and that such records were to be the progenitors of a continuing and ever-widening repertoire of symphonic and orchestral music by the world's leading orchestras and conductors.

As Roland Gelatt says in "The Fabulous Phonograph" - "The Orchestra came last". Likewise, among the record collecting fraternity, collectors of orchestral recordings appear to have come last and it is only comparatively recently that such collectors have begun to grow in numbers.

Because no methods or techniques of the recording engineers could overcome the inherent incapacity of the acoustical system to give life-like orchestral reproductive sound, this type of record was neglected for so long. It was not until the advent of electrical recording in the mid 1920's that orchestras were recorded with anything like a true representation of the sound they created in the concert halls. Once this sound had been captured on records it followed that here was the chance for the leading conductors to show not only their own interpretive powers but also to display the skills, brilliance and finesse of the great orchestras of the day.

Second Record 2563248. We come not only to a great orchestra but also to a world famous composer in the role of conductor. This is Richard Strauss with the Berlin State Opera

Orchestra conducting Mozart's Symphony No.40 in G Minor K.V.550 which they recorded in 1928. The work was originally on Polydors 69869 to 69872 and they may have been available in the British Isles from Alfred Imhof, London, who began advertising Polydor records in April, 1925 and stocking their catalogues. Prices ranged from 3s. to 5s.9d. in five categories, and no doubt it was possible to order this Mozart Symphony when it became available.

Another work on side 1 of this record is Mendelssohn's "Nocturne" from a Midsummer Night's Dream" Op.61, also recorded in 1928 and is from 66850. The orchestra is the Berlin Philharmonic and is conducted by the famous Erich Kleiber.

Side 2 brings us a conductor whose followers in Britain have formed themselves into a society to perpetuate his name and his work on records. This is the great Wilhelm Furtwängler who here conducts Mendelssohn's overture "The Hebrides" Op.26 which is a 1930 recording from Polydor 95470, followed by some of the Incidental and Ballet music to "Rosamunde" Op 26 by Schubert, from Polydors 95458 and 66935 recorded in 1930 and 1929 respectively.

"The Hebrides " overture was issued in Britain on Decca Polydor CA8090 in 1932 and the "Rosamunde" items on CA8098 in October of the same year.

The final item on this side brings to our notice another well-known composer in the role of conductor. He is Hans Pfitzner conducting the third movement of Schumann's Symphony No.2 in C Op.61. The matrices for this were derived from the 'B' side of Polydor 95414 and both sides making up 95415, which were recorded in 1928, the orchestra being that of the Berlin State Opera. Decca seem not to have issued this symphony.

Third Record. 2563249. Side 1. Max Fiedler is the conductor interpreting a favourite work of mine through the playing of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra . .the Symphony No.2 in D of Brahms, Op.73. Max Fiedler knew Brahms personally. This performance was recorded in 1931 and is from Polydors 95453/7 ( also issued in Britain as Decca Polydors CA8004/8 in 1932.

Side 2 brings the return of Erich Kleiber, this time conducting the Berlin State Opera Orchestra in "The Moldau" from Smetana's "Ma Vlast", another 1928 recording, issued on Polydors 66652/3.

Fourth Record. 2563250. Yet another conductor, who, incidentally, died only two years ago, is presented to us on this disc. He is Manfred Gurlitt who studied under the composer Humperdinck (famous for his opera 'Hansel and Gretl). Herer Gurlitt conducts the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in Beethoven's Violin Concerto, Op.61, in which the soloist is Joseph Wolfsthal. He was a boy prodigy becoming leader at different times of both the Philharmonic and State Opera orchestras of Berlin. He died 41 years before his conductor on this record, aged 32, succumbing to an attack of influenza. This apticular was taken in 1929 and issued on Polydors 95243/7. Both sides of this L.P. are devoted to the Concerto, the total playing time being 39 mins. 52 secs. The cadenzas used are by Joachim. This set of records appears not to have been issued by Decca.

Fifth Record. 2563251. This commences with a conductor who died only last year and whose world wide fame came quite late in his career. I speak of Otto Klemperer, who can be heard on many modern stereo recordings but is here on the disc represented by a recording made in 1926 and issued on Polydor 66463. It is a performance of Ravel's "Alborada del Gracioso" with the Berlin State Opera Orchestra.

This is followed by another new name, Oscar Fried, also a pupil of Humperdinck, who was

recognised in his day as a brilliant conductor of the then contemporary music. Here he conducts Stravinsky's 1919 version of his "Firebird" ballet suite (L'Oiseau de Feu) which Fried recorded with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1928. The Polydors 95052/3 were issued on Decca CA8235/6 eight years later in 1936.

The reverse of this last L.P. has an example of a composer conducting his own composition. Richard Strauss conducts the Berlin State Opera Orchestra playing his Symphonic Poem "Don Juan" Op. 20. Issued on Decca Polydors CA8126/7 in 1933 from Polydors 66902/3 recorded in 1932.

The last items are the Prelude to Act 1 and the Liebestod (Isolde's Death) from Wagner's opera "Tristan und Isolde". The Berlin Philharmonic is again conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler and was recorded in 1928, being issued on Polydors 95438/9. Decca issued the records separately, the Prelude in 1932 (CA 8039) and the Liebestod on CA 8156, in 1933.

I presume that most collectors are familiar with the characteristic sounds of acoustically recorded orchestral recordings and will know what to expect from the transfers comprising the first L.P. in this set.

Collectors of symphonic and orchestral music will be more familiar with the electrical recordings, if not of the actual recordings reviewed here, at least with other contemporary issues. The disadvantage of 78 rpm recordings of extended works was the need to be frequently rising from one's seat to change the record, or the break in continuity while a record-changer worked. What a welcome introduction was the L.P. record! Though it did make some of our favourite 78 rpm sets "old fashioned". With the present set under review one can sit back with pleasure and listen to these well-transferred re-creations in the realization that one has not to jump up every four minutes or so. (However, if you are like me, and do not take a grip of yourselves, you will find a reflex action at work at such intervals of time when there is no need! This is not a reflection on the transfer of the originals on to these L.P.s !)

The price of this set includes the beautifully produced booklet. Excellent value for money whether you own the original 78 rpms or not.

## WHITE RECORDS

## FRANK ANDREWS

Since my listing of White cylinders appeared in 'The Talking Machine Review' No.24, I noted the following letter in 'The Phono Trader:-

Dear Sir, In the December number of your journal in connection with "White" records you mention that Mr. Leslie, who is in the Record Dept. of the General Phonograph Company, recorded the Francis Joseph Band in Berlin. I desire to say that I was responsible for this recording and Mr. Leslie was the assistant.

The system which I used in making these German records was the joint invention of myself and Mr. J. Lewis Young and is a positive system and was entirely unknown to Mr. Leslie or anyone else, until we demonstrated it.

It is well known that I made nearly 250 masters in Berlin inside of 14 days and that these masters were much admired by lovers of Talking Machines and I am, as well as Mr. Lewis Young, proud of the accomplishment of such a great deal of work in such a short space of time.

I may say that the recording blanks were made by Mr. Young in London and that every thing went like clockwork.

Unfortunately, when these records were brought to London they were duplicated in Pettit's Duplicator and the duplicates were used for the purposes of making matrices, and naturally, a good deal of tone quality was lost thereby. But in spite of that, these records have had a large sale in Germany and they have, as recordings, brought myself and Mr. Lewis Young congratulations from those persons well able to judge such matters.

Ernest Sinclair

26th. January, 1907.

(late Sinclair & Young)

## EDISON CYLINDERS

Major H.H. Annand has forwarded the following additions and amendments to 'Edison Two Minute Cylinder Records' compiled by himself and S.H. Carter in 1964.

5800 Answer } \*\* (delete Mahoney)

5801 For you } Louis Schnepel

5802 Daddy }

6600, 6602, 6603 are by Frank North

7222, 7223 are by H. Kessler

7836 Then you'll remember me

7854 Home, sweet, home

7849 I dreamt that I dwelt in Marble halls

7886 The last rose of summer

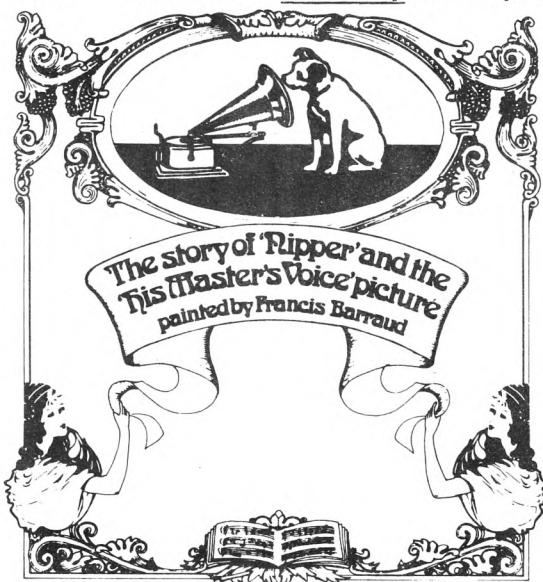
7913 The Honeysuckle and the bee

7972 \* \* the full name of the artist is Myra Price

8395, 8446, 8601. The Miss Chappell is a pseudonym for Edith Chapman

9102, 9123. The correct name of the artist is Theo van Yorx

10325 The artist is Pete Murray not Billy Murray.



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